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Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

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Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its tenth session

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), in which the Peacebuilding Commission was requested to submit an annual report to the General Assembly for an annual debate and review. The report will also be submitted to the Council, pursuant to its resolution 1646 (2005), for an annual debate. The report covers the tenth session of the Commission, held from 1 January to 31 December 2016.

2. On 27 April 2016, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted parallel, substantively identical, resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)), by which the two organs, inter alia, requested the Peacebuilding Commission to include, in its annual reports, information on progress made in reviewing its working methods and provisional rules of procedure and encouraged the Commission, through its Organizational Committee, to consider diversifying its working methods to enhance its efficiency and flexibility in support of sustaining peace. The structure and content of the present report therefore includes information on the work undertaken by the Commission in implementing the relevant recommendations contained in the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, while also reflecting the priorities identified in the annual report of the Commission on its ninth session (A/70/714-S/2016/115).

II. Work of the Peacebuilding Commission

A. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace: opportunities and challenges

3. The Commission embarked on the work of its tenth session in the spirit of examining the far-reaching recommendations of the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/69/968-S/2015/490)

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and implementing the above-mentioned resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council. Both the Assembly and the Council, in those resolutions, define sustaining peace as:

> a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development, and emphasizing that sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the Government and all other national stakeholders, and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations engagement at all stages of conflict, and in all its dimensions, and needs sustained international attention and assistance

In those resolutions, the Assembly and the Council also called for the strengthening of the Commission, its convening and bridging role and its partnerships with other stakeholders, including the international financial institutions, in addition to addressing country-specific situations. They also called for better intergovernmental coherence, partnerships and operational and policy coherence and invited the Secretary-General to provide options on increasing, restructuring and better prioritizing funding dedicated to United Nations peacebuilding activities.

4. Throughout the reporting period, the Commission continued to address the situations in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Since the eruption of the political crisis in Burundi in 2015, the Commission has intensified its focus on that country. Through visits to Burundi and the region, the Council's Burundi configuration has engaged with the Government and national stakeholders, encouraging a peaceful solution by Burundians, with regional and international support, including that of the African Union, the East African Community and neighbouring countries. During his two visits to Burundi and the region, the Chair of the Burundi configuration also engaged the authorities of the United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda, the African Union and the mediator of the East African Community, the former President of the Republic of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa, highlighting the importance of a holistic peacebuilding approach based on the three pillars of the United Nations system, as they are outlined, inter alia, in General Assembly resolution 60/251, and of local capacities for peace, including the constructive work of the group of women mediators. In another example of the convening power of the Commission, and its capacity to add value, it championed policy discussions on the economic impact of the political crisis in Burundi, including through consultations in Geneva on the country's socioeconomic situation, briefings with officials from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Government authorities in charge of finance and the economy, and with representatives of the private sector in Burundi, with a focus on relations between the Government and its international partners.

5. On the Central African Republic, the Commission sought to sustain the political momentum offered by the peaceful conduct of elections in 2016 through its engagement in a peacebuilding and recovery process. The Chair of the Central

African Republic configuration attended the ninth meeting of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic, supported the process of mobilizing partners around the national recovery and peacebuilding plan and convened a meeting, on 2 November 2016, in preparation for the donors conference of Brussels, attended by the two main partners of the conference, the European Union and the World Bank, which helped to highlight the urgent need for support for the country. At the Brussels conference for the Central African Republic, held on 17 November 2016, the international community came together to signal its renewed engagement and support for the country by pledging over €2 billion for the implementation of the comprehensive National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan 2017-2021.

6. With regard to Guinea, the Commission focused on efforts aimed at consolidating the gains achieved over the past five years. The Guinea configuration organized a policy discussion on the reform of the justice sector through a meeting with the Guinean Minister of Justice in May 2016, providing the Government with a platform to present its strategy in the area of justice, and an opportunity for partners to respond in terms of political support and financial resources. In an important initiative, in line with the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, the Commission and the Government of Guinea have initiated a review of their engagement in order to highlight progress made and lessons learned, and to guide the decision on the future engagement of Guinea with the Commission. In this context, a delegation from the Commission, composed of representatives of Burkina Faso, Guinea and Japan, visited Guinea from 20 to 25 November 2016. The delegation discussed the priorities of future engagement with the Government of Guinea, as well as its possible form, taking into account the recommendation contained in the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture that the Commission consider diversifying its working methods to enhance its efficiency and flexibility. The conclusions and recommendations of the review will be considered by the Commission in January 2017.

7. With regard to the situation in Guinea-Bissau, the Commission continued to mobilize its members, especially regional actors, to mitigate the fragile situation as well as any possible recurrence of tensions. Aligning itself with the efforts led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Commission supported the subregional efforts and provided input to the deliberations of the Security Council. It also maintained focus on the follow-up to the donors round table of 2015, at which the Government of Guinea-Bissau presented a national strategy of social progress for the next 10 years, aimed at the promotion of governance and institutional reforms based on inclusiveness and tolerance, as well as on the sustainable and equitable use of its natural capital and resources.

8. In partnership with the Government of Liberia, key stakeholders and United Nations actors, the Commission prioritized two issues during the reporting period: the revision of the 2010 statement of mutual commitments (SMC) between the Government of Liberia and the Commission and the articulation of its advice to the Security Council on peacebuilding priorities that need to be taken into consideration during and beyond the political transition of 2017 in Liberia and the transition of the presence of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Comprehensive and inclusive consultations with a broad range of national and international stakeholders in Liberia and within the United Nations system led to a revised statement of mutual commitments, which was endorsed by the Government of Liberia and the

Commission and rolled out in May 2016. The peacebuilding priority areas identified in the revised statement of mutual commitments are: security sector development; strengthening the rule of law; promoting national reconciliation; and peaceful and inclusive elections in 2017. In anticipation of the deliberations by the Security Council on the future of UNMIL in December 2016, the Vice-Chair of the Commission visited Liberia in October and co-hosted a multi-stakeholder forum on "Sustaining peace through transition in Liberia". The discussion focused on how to ensure that the root causes of the conflict were being addressed during and beyond transition, and what support to sustaining peace in Liberia should look like post-UNMIL. The forum signalled the commitment of Liberia to work towards a successful transition process post-UNMIL and provided an important opportunity to identify longer term peacebuilding priorities in light of the Security Council's upcoming decision on the future presence of the United Nations in the country.

9. In March 2016, the Chair of the Commission's Sierra Leone configuration led the second expert-level peacebuilding assessment mission in Sierra Leone to take stock of progress made on peacebuilding priorities since the last such mission in November 2013. As part of the visit by the Chair of the Commission to West Africa in June 2016 to explore the subregional peacebuilding opportunities and challenges in the region during its recovery from the Ebola outbreak, there was an opportunity to further discuss the future role of the Sierra Leone configuration in the post-Ebola period, especially in light of the request of the Security Council that the Commission review its engagement with a view to scaling down its role in 2013 as the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) was drawing down (see resolution 2097 (2013)). The draft report of the assessment mission was presented to the members of the Commission at a meeting of the Sierra Leone configuration on 7 December 2016 for further consideration. At the same meeting, in light of the request of the Government of Sierra Leone that the Commission remain engaged through the 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections, the Commission was briefed by a range of stakeholders on the status of preparations for the upcoming elections.

B. Towards a more flexible Peacebuilding Commission

Regional issues, including sustained attention on the long-term impacts of the Ebola outbreak

10. Building on its previous experience, the Commission continued to work in a flexible way and to use the platform of its Organizational Committee to convene regional, country-specific and thematic discussions. The Commission was particularly successful in addressing peacebuilding challenges and opportunities in West Africa from three distinct angles. On 18 January 2016, the Commission, with the consent of all the countries concerned, convened a meeting on "Peacebuilding trends and threats in West Africa", which benefited from in-depth briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. The meeting offered an opportunity to convene regional and subregional discussions of the Commission and to highlight the positive signs emerging from the region in 2015, in particular in terms of democratic developments and electoral processes. The Commission discussed the challenges the region was facing, including violent extremism and cross-border

security, and stressed the need for stronger synergies within the United Nations system and a more prominent role for the Commission in peacebuilding and sustaining peace so that it may be able to adequately assist in addressing these challenges.

11. On 6 April 2016, the Commission convened a meeting on the subregional dimensions of peacebuilding in West Africa, which provided an opportunity for a discussion with senior representatives of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Peacebuilding Support Office on a number of regional challenges to peacebuilding and the role the Commission could play in supporting the efforts of countries, including Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, to achieve sustainable peace, if requested. Representatives at the meeting also welcomed the efforts to enhance coherence within the United Nations system, particularly between the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDP and discussed the important work being undertaken by regional and subregional organizations in West Africa and the need to further strengthen their partnership with the Commission. It was noted that the advisory role of the Commission was of particular importance during the drawdown of peacekeeping operations, and it was also stressed that capacity-building, the extension of State authority and the strengthening of peoples and communities living along borders were prerequisites in taking on cross-border peacebuilding challenges. In this connection, the meeting recognized the important contribution of the Peacebuilding Fund, particularly in its support to cross-border initiatives in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali.

12. From 9 to 18 June 2016, the Chair of the Commission made a visit to West Africa to explore the subregional peacebuilding opportunities and challenges in the region, which was on the road to recovery after the Ebola outbreak. The delegation focused on national and regional recovery efforts, particularly on the political and socioeconomic priorities, and discussed and identified opportunities for constructive engagement of the Commission and the international community with various national stakeholders from the subregion. The Chair made a commitment to remain engaged in national and regional issues concerning Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the subregion of Mano River Basin, and to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach to sustaining peace. He also gave reassurances of the Commission's availability to continue serving as a forum for sustaining international attention, including by bringing attention to emerging national and regional needs, opportunities and challenges, as required.

Cross-cutting issues

13. The Commission continued its consideration of the theme "Financing for peacebuilding", initiated in 2015, with discussions on Papua New Guinea and Somalia, in accordance with paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005). In this regard, on 10 October 2016, the Commission convened a meeting on financing for peacebuilding to discuss the ways in which the United Nations was assisting Kyrgyzstan to address its peacebuilding priorities, including through the support of the Peacebuilding Fund. The meeting marked an important step in the implementation of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, demonstrating the flexibility of the

Commission in considering cross-cutting issues and strengthening its synergies with the Peacebuilding Fund in order to fulfil its mandate. The meeting benefited from briefings by a senior representative of the Government of Kyrgyzstan, the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, the Resident Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan and representatives of Kyrgyz civil society organizations. Discussions focused on the progress the country had made on reconciliation and peacebuilding since 2010, with the support of the Peacebuilding Fund. Delegations commended the Fund for its catalytic, timely and critical contribution to peacebuilding and prevention efforts in Kyrgyzstan and stressed the importance of predictable and sustainable financing for the Fund. The meeting also highlighted that a regional approach and collective efforts were important elements in addressing cross-border challenges, including the rise of violent extremism, illegal drug trafficking and migration. Finally, it was noted that the Commission should continue considering the theme "Financing for peacebuilding".

14. Following up on the adoption of Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security, the Commission reflected on how young people can contribute to peacebuilding, at a number of its meetings in 2016, including during its discussions focused on West Africa, the Commission's annual session in June and in discussions on the Commission's gender strategy. A young representative from civil society addressed the Commission at its annual session and presented the challenges faced by children, adolescents and young people in the context of the peacebuilding process and the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone. The Chair of the Commission and the Chairs of the country configurations systematically engaged in discussions, on the role that youth can play to contribute to peacebuilding, with national counterparts during their field visits. While concerns were expressed about the engagement of some fraction of the youth population in violence, the role that young women and men could, and did, play to contribute to peace and stability was acknowledged in the Commission's discussions in relation to young people.

Gender strategy of the Peacebuilding Commission

15. As a follow-up to the report on its ninth session, on 7 September 2016 the Commission adopted an advisory gender strategy to help guide its work on gender-related aspects of peacebuilding. The strategy was the outcome of a preparatory process that started in 2015 and of a series of consultations with Member States, practitioners, experts and representatives of relevant entities of the United Nations system conducted by the Commission during its tenth session, including a special session on the margins of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which brought together civil society organizations from a number of countries on the Commission's agenda. The strategy is a timely effort in integrating a gender dimension of peacebuilding into the work of the Commission, accelerating the momentum created by the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. The strategy, inter alia, underscores the importance of women's leadership and participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding and the substantial link between women's meaningful involvement in those efforts, their effectiveness and their long-term sustainability.

16. Following the adoption of its gender strategy on 7 September 2016, the Commission is considering the nomination of a gender focal point from among its membership in order to advance the implementation of the strategy. The

Commission and its Chair have also taken steps to implement the strategy at the country-specific level, including through discussions on women's participation in the elections in Liberia and on the implications of the UNMIL drawdown as well as during the Chair's meeting with the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in October 2016. In addition, the Commission invited civil society representatives from Sierra Leone to brief the Sierra Leone configuration on the participation of women and civil society in the upcoming elections.

Provisional rules of procedure and working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission

17. In implementation of paragraph 5 of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, the Organizational Committee initiated a review of its provisional rules of procedure and working methods in order to make its work more flexible and effective. In this connection, and building on a non-paper prepared by the Permanent Missions of Kenya and Switzerland, the Committee convened several expert-level consultations, which culminated in a report composed of two parts: part A, implementable actions based on good practices; and part B, recommendations, which require further discussion. The Commission informally adopted part A of the report on 18 November 2016 (see annex to the present report) as a living document to guide the work of the Commission. Part A will be periodically reviewed by the Commission in its annual reports. Part B will be further discussed at the beginning of the eleventh session.

The bridging role of the Peacebuilding Commission: the work of the Commission with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council

18. The resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture call on the Commission to serve as a bridge among the principal organs and relevant entities of the United Nations, given the close interlinkages between development, peace and security and human rights. In this connection, throughout the tenth session, the Commission continued to explore ways to enhance its advisory and bridging role with the General Assembly and the Security Council. The first opportunity was the "high-level thematic debate on the United Nations, peace and security" (10 and 11 May 2016), organized by the President of the General Assembly shortly after the adoption of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. The meeting, which attracted high-level participation from Member States, reaffirmed, inter alia, support for peacebuilding and for sustaining peace and confirmed the importance of synergies between the General Assembly and the Commission. In this connection, the President of the General Assembly has initiated preparations for a high-level dialogue, to be held on 24 January 2017, which will bring together the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the Chair of the Commission.

19. In relation to the Security Council, the Commission engaged in active consultations through: (a) the fifth informal interactive dialogue co-organized by the President of the Council and the Chair of the Commission; (b) a periodic stocktaking at the expert level, coordinated by Egypt; and (c) formal briefings to the

Council on country-specific and thematic issues. The fifth informal interactive dialogue (22 June 2016) offered an opportunity to discuss practical ways to strengthen coordination, coherence and cooperation between the Security Council and the Commission. The dialogue was held shortly after the adoption of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture and was structured around three main issues: transitions; the links between the work of the Commission in New York and in the field; and the relationship between the Commission and the Security Council. Discussions highlighted how the Commission, through its convening role, could contribute a peacebuilding perspective to inform the Council's decision-making process, as requested, particularly during discussions on the drawdown of peacekeeping operations. It was also noted that, in situations of transition, including from special political missions to United Nations country teams, the Security Council should regularly seek and draw upon the Commission to assist with the longer term perspective required for sustaining peace. By bringing together security and development actors, the Commission was well placed to act as a bridge between the principal organs and relevant entities of the United Nations through the sharing of advice on peacebuilding needs and priorities. The discussions also referred to the importance, for the Commission, of improving its working methods in order to enhance its efficiency and flexibility, including by strengthening its work at the regional level to fulfil its mandate.

20. In February 2016, the Organizational Committee nominated Egypt to succeed Malaysia as coordinator of the periodic stocktaking exercise of the Commission's advisory function with respect to the Security Council. Two informal expert-level meetings were held (13 April and 24 October 2016), focusing on the advisory role of the Commission in connection with country-specific situations and with regard to the intention of the Council to regularly request the advice of the Commission, as noted in paragraph 8 of its resolution 2282 (2016). The discussion highlighted the important role the Commission could play in support of the Council discussions on the UNMIL drawdown. Furthermore, a number of good practices that could strengthen the advisory role of the Commission were discussed, focusing on: its advisory role in connection with the situations in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia; establishing and maintaining strong partnerships with regional organizations; and structuring and planning its work in a way that would enrich its advice to the Council.

21. With regard to thematic briefings to the Security Council, the Commission addressed the Council on a number of occasions. On 23 February 2016, at the Council's open debate on "Post-conflict peacebuilding: review of the peacebuilding architecture", the Chair underscored the importance of sustaining peace and the need for a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and sustainable peace. He stressed that investments in prevention of the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict were considerably less expensive and sustainable than reacting to crises, and that, therefore, predictable, sustained and adequate financing to address the root causes of conflict are required. The Chair also stressed that the Commission had an important role to play in ensuring coherence within the United Nations system and in functioning as a bridge between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

22. On 28 March 2016, the Chair, on behalf of the Commission, briefed the Council at its open debate on "Women, peace and security: the role of women in

conflict prevention and resolution in Africa". In his statement, the Chair reiterated the importance of women's participation in approaches to peacebuilding and conflict prevention and stated that young women and men could play a role in this endeavour. The Chair stressed the significance of a systematic and efficient translation of formal commitments into concrete action on the ground and highlighted the ongoing efforts of the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund in this regard. The Chair also noted that the adoption by the Security Council of its resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security was an important step towards greater inclusivity in peacebuilding, and that, through its adoption, the role young women and men can play in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding was finally getting the recognition it deserved.

23. On 24 May 2016, the Chair, representing the Commission, briefed the Security Council at its open debate on the "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations: United Nations-African Union Peace and Security Cooperation: Chapter VIII application and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture". The Chair reiterated the need to focus on conflict prevention and to address the root causes of conflict. He stressed that the peace and security challenges facing the Organization were complex and interlinked and called for a collective action. He recalled that the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture stressed the importance of the partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and the regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union and added that, building on that mandate, the Commission intended to use the momentum generated by the new resolutions to further enhance and institutionalize its cooperation with the African Union.

24. On 28 July 2016, Ms. Amina C. Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Kenya, in her capacity as Chair of the Commission, briefed the Security Council at its open debate on "Peacebuilding in Africa". The Chair noted that the Commission continued to engage with the African Union and its various regional entities in order to support peacebuilding in Africa, underscoring that genuine partnerships remained essential to sustaining peace and development in Africa and noting that peace and development could only be achieved by working together with key stakeholders, including the private sector and the civil society, at the local, provincial, national, regional and international level. In connection with the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, Ms. Mohamed reiterated the importance of prevention and of investing in early warning systems.

25. With regard to country-specific advice to the Security Council, the Chairs of the country-specific configurations provided the Council with substantive updates on key peacebuilding priorities defined by the respective countries. In connection with Liberia, the Vice-Chair continued to advocate for the importance of sustaining international attention on Liberia in a collective manner and stressed that a smooth transition period would ensure the country's robust path towards further consolidation of peace. In connection with Guinea-Bissau, the meeting of the Commission in March 2016 was used as an opportunity to prepare an input for the Council's visit to Guinea-Bissau, in line with its efforts to find a peaceful solution to the political crisis.

26. The synergies between the Security Council and the Commission were also discussed at a meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, entitled "Improving cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council for sustaining peace in Africa", which took place on 1 November 2016. The meeting recognized that, in view of its nature, the Commission was well placed to provide the Council with a broader perspective on sustaining peace, including when the Council was discussing the situation of countries undergoing transition.

27. In relation to the Economic and Social Council, a joint event with the Commission was organized on 24 June 2016 to discuss the theme "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustaining peace". The event, which focused on the nexus between peace and development, highlighted how sustaining peace and strong institutions were critical for achieving all of the Sustainable Development Goals and, in turn, how the entire 2030 Agenda could contribute to sustaining peace — before, during and after conflict. Member States noted that humanitarian intervention, peacebuilding and development had to be implemented in a coherent and coordinated manner, and that achieving the 2030 Agenda and sustaining peace required a more holistic and coherent approach. It was also noted that the ongoing discussions on the long-term positioning of the United Nations development system could provide opportunities to strengthen coherence and remove the competition for resources. Finally, delegations recognized the role of the development system in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and strongly supported regular dialogue between the Economic and Social Council and the Commission to promote coherence and complementarity between the Organization's peace and security efforts and its development, human rights and humanitarian work.

28. On 26 July 2016, the Chair was invited to brief the Economic and Social Council at its coordination and management meeting. Building on the good practices of the work of the Commission in support of African countries, the Chair underscored the importance of a multidimensional approach that went beyond the military and security responses, and of focusing on addressing the root causes of conflict in affected countries. Building on the discussions of 24 June 2016, the Chair reiterated that the Commission was uniquely placed to assist or address the peace-development-humanitarian nexus, including in relation to the 2030 Agenda, and noted that the Council and the Commission should review good practices in addressing the root causes of conflict and how the United Nations development system has integrated sustaining peace into its planning frameworks and activities.

Partnerships and engagement with other stakeholders

Third annual session of the Peacebuilding Commission (June 2016)

29. Throughout the tenth session, the Commission worked to strengthen partnerships with a number of relevant actors. On 23 June 2016, the Commission convened its third annual session to discuss the topic "Transitions as a challenge to consolidating peace and security: the role of the Commission in diplomacy and political accompaniment". The meeting, which took place less than two months after the adoption of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, represented a timely opportunity for Member States to discuss how the convening and bridging role of the Commission could support countries in the process of

transition. The discussions benefited from statements made by the Deputy Secretary-General and the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, and by presentations made by senior government representatives, senior officials from the United Nations and the African Union and by civil society organizations.

30. The discussion highlighted key principles to be considered when supporting countries undergoing transition. Delegations placed particular emphasis on the importance of taking into account the specific context of a country in transition and stated that planning and assessments needed to be carried out at an early stage. The meeting recognized national ownership as a priority and noted the importance of inclusivity at all levels of society, including women and youth. Furthermore, participants stressed that addressing the root causes of conflict, strengthening people's access to justice, national reconciliation and decentralization were also some of the measures that needed to be taken in order to address concerns of people during a mission's drawdown. Delegations also underscored the importance of predictable and sustainable financing, as well as the need to strengthen partnerships with regional, subregional and neighbouring countries, as well as civil society organizations.

31. In connection with the role of the Commission, participants underscored that it should advocate for sustained political, technical and financial support to countries undergoing transition. Its unique role in the United Nations system should be used to provide strategic advice to the General Assembly, Security Council and Economic and Social Council, as well as to strengthen synergies with regional and subregional actors to promote a coherent and systematic approach to supporting countries undergoing transitions.

32. On 7 September 2016, the Commission continued its consideration of peacebuilding opportunities in countries undergoing transitions at a meeting with the Secretary-General of the Mano River Union. Focusing on the countries of the subregion, the discussion proposed key priority areas, including the need to strengthen capacities at the governmental and non-governmental level, and the importance of ensuring a coherent approach of the United Nations system. In view of the ongoing transitions in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, the Commission recognized the important contribution of the Peacebuilding Fund, in partnership with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), UNMIL and the United Nations country teams in both countries, in developing cross-border projects and supporting both countries to strengthen their capacities at this crucial time.

33. On 7 October 2016, the Commission convened an expert-level meeting on good practices in peacebuilding, which built on the work done by the Working Group on Lessons Learned. Based on the outcome of the annual session, and in order to further explore ways in which the convening role of the Commission could support countries undergoing transitions, the meeting was held on the topic, "The challenge of sustaining peace: lessons from previous transitions". The meeting, which benefited from presentations by the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNDP and the civil society organization, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, focused on the situations in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste and identified a number of good practices that could be replicated in order to ensure smooth transition

processes. A second expert-level meeting on good practices in peacebuilding took place on 21 November 2016 on the topic "The challenge of sustaining peace: role of the Peacebuilding Commission in mission drawdown". The second meeting focused on the ongoing transitions in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia. Building on the outcome of the first meeting, the second addressed the need for early and long-term planning, which needed a system-wide approach in order to ensure that transitions did not lead to a relapse into conflict. Delegations underscored the critical role of the Commission and the Fund, in particular when working in synergy, to maintain the attention of the international community in the aftermath of transitions and to provide the support required by countries to strengthen local institutions. In connection with the advisory role of the Commission, it was reiterated that, in view of its inclusive composition and the mandate to convene a wide range of relevant stakeholders, it should engage with national Governments and authorities, civil society organizations, international financial institutions and development actors in order to provide comprehensive advice to the Security Council and improve coordination in transition settings.

Integrate the perspectives of regional actors/partnership with regional organizations

34. In response to the call of the General Assembly and the Security Council in their resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, the Commission worked to strengthen its partnership with regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union. From 17 to 19 October 2016, the Commission Chairs visited the Headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa to explore ways to further enhance the Commission's cooperation with the African Union Peace and Security Council in the areas of conflict prevention and sustaining peace across Africa. The delegation was led by the Chair of the Commission and included the Vice-Chairs and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support. The delegation held a meeting with the African Union Peace and Security Council, which was chaired by the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the African Union and attended by the 15 members of the Council: Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Chad, the Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Uganda and Zambia. The permanent members of the Security Council, Angola and Senegal, were also invited to attend. On 19 October 2016, the delegation also attended the workshop on the 10 years of the African Union policy on post-conflict reconstruction and development, organized by the African Union Commission.

35. Meetings and consultations with the African Union highlighted the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in the areas of peace and security, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Specifically, members of the African Union Peace and Security Council highlighted the Union's effort on peacebuilding in line with the development and implementation of the post-conflict reconstruction and development policy framework, adopted by the African Union in 2006, as well as the African Solidarity Initiative. It was suggested that the Commission and the Peace and Security Council hold regular consultations, including a formal annual meeting. Following the visit of the Chair of the Commission, the Peace and Security Council issued a communiqué on the possibility of carrying out joint visits to conflict-affected areas in Africa and

of the sharing of good practices in addressing conflict prevention and sustaining peace challenges. On 17 November 2016, the Chair reported to the Commission on the main findings of his visit to the African Union. The meeting, which also benefited from a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union, was an opportunity to express the appreciation of the Chair and the Commission for the visit to Addis Ababa and to highlight the importance of strengthening synergies between the Commission and the African Union in the areas of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, underlining that both institutions should work to better address the root causes of conflict and support institution-building.

36. Building on the visits of the Commission's Chairs and the discussions on the regional, cross-border and transnational peacebuilding challenges in West Africa, the Commission also continued to enhance its partnership with the subregional organizations on efforts towards sustaining peace in Africa, in particular with ECOWAS and the Mano River Union. The Commission also worked to strengthen its partnership with the East African Community, in support of the national and regional mediation efforts in Burundi. In Guinea-Bissau, the Commission continued to provide a useful platform for engagement of countries from the region, including Portuguese-speaking countries, particularly in assisting to prevent further escalation of the political crisis of 2015.

37. On 23 September 2016, Ms. Amina C. Mohamed, in her capacity as Chair of the Commission, and Mr. Samura Kamara, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone and Chair of the Group of Seven Plus (g7+), co-chaired a meeting with members of the Commission and of the Group on the theme: "Peer-learning among fragile and conflict-affected countries on sustaining peace and sustainable development". During the event, the special envoy of the Group launched the "g7+ Foundation", which will document some of the unique experiences of the Group for the benefit of other countries in pursuit of peace and resilience.

Partnership with the World Bank and other international financial institutions

38. The Commission worked in close partnership with international financial institutions throughout the period of its tenth session. The Vice-Chair attended a meeting of the World Bank, held in Washington, D.C. on 1 to 3 March 2016, on the Banks' "Fragility and conflict forum", which presented an opportunity to discuss how the Commission and the Bank could enhance their collaboration in support of conflict-affected countries.

39. At a meeting of the Commission on 7 September 2016, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support reported on the decision of the United Nations and the World Bank to work on a joint policy study on the role of development in efforts to assist Member States to prevent violent conflict. He noted that the study, conducted by a joint United Nations-World Bank core team (including the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Department for Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and UNDP on the United Nations side), intended to improve the understanding of the potential role of development policies and programmes in conflict prevention, and to provide recommendations on how development actors could strengthen conflict prevention efforts. The Commission was encouraged to provide an important platform to advance the

discussion as the study could provide an opportunity for further consultations between the Commission and the Executive Directors of the World Bank.

40. At the country-specific level, the World Bank, IMF, the African Development Bank and the European Union actively engaged on policy discussions on Burundi, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau. In Liberia, the revised statement of mutual commitments of 2016 proved to be useful framework to initiate a joint World Bank and UNMIL financial review, building on the public expenditure review issued in January 2013. The review will inform the Government of the different options for affordable security service packages over the next five years, as well as the level and potential sources of financing. It will also enable Liberia to consider better ways of allocating resources to peacebuilding priorities, including a consideration of their affordability, in order to ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources.

41. To ensure that the fragile and hard-won stability in the Central African Republic will be sustainable, the United Nations worked with the World Bank and the European Union to support the Government in undertaking a recovery and peacebuilding assessment, which helped in the development of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, 2017-2021 and with the preparations of the international donors conference for the Central African Republic held in Brussels on 17 November 2016. The assessment identified urgent needs at $120 per capita, more than twice the actual aid provided in 2012, and included measures aimed at strengthening security, supporting political reconciliation and inclusion and boosting economic recovery. Based on this assessment, donors have pledged 2.06 billion euros ($2.2 billion) to help rebuild the war-torn country, including $500 million over the next three years from the World Bank.

42. In regard to Burundi, the Chair of the Burundi configuration, in collaboration with the Resident Coordinator, organized socioeconomic consultations in Geneva, on 7 and 8 November 2016, with representatives of the World Bank, IMF, the African Development Bank, the European Union and the relevant entities of the United Nations system. During the consultations, the representatives were able to: (a) compare their assessments of the macroeconomic and socioeconomic situation, including the impact of the political crisis on the economy; (b) examine current responses to the socioeconomic challenges; and (c) discuss opportunities to assist Burundi in responding to the socioeconomic challenges with greater policy coherence among partners and with a peacebuilding approach. The outcome of the consultations was shared with the Government and the Commission for consideration.

Financing for peacebuilding: strengthening the synergies between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund

43. In implementation of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, and building on its previous work, the Commission continued to strengthen synergies with the Peacebuilding Fund by ensuring a better flow of information from the Fund to the Commission in two ways: (a) inviting the Peacebuilding Support Office to provide updates on the work of the Fund at regional or country-specific meetings of the Commission; and (b) inviting the Chair and members of the Advisory Group of the Peacebuilding Fund to brief the

Commission on the findings emerging from the regular meetings of the Advisory Group, such as on the occasion of the meeting of the Commission of 14 December. More coherence between the Commission and the Fund was also sought through briefings to the Commission by countries receiving financing from the Fund, including at the meeting on Kyrgyzstan held on 10 October 2016.

44. The need to strengthen the synergies between the Commission and the Fund was also addressed during the Commission's discussion of its provisional rules of procedure and working methods. It was noted that, while recognizing the need to preserve the independence of the Fund, more regular briefings on the ongoing projects of the Fund from Peacebuilding Support Office and the Advisory Group of the Fund are required.

III. Conclusions and agenda going forward

45. The upcoming reporting period will present an important opportunity for the Commission to demonstrate successful implementation of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. In that regard, the Commission will continue to pursue several important work streams that could further strengthen its country-specific and policy-related engagements.

A. Implementation of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture

46. The Peacebuilding Commission, together with the Peacebuilding Support Office, will actively ensure the implementation of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, in addition to the actions identified under each of the strategic priorities identified below.

Action:

(a) The Organizational Committee will convene periodic discussions to ensure the implementation of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture;

(b) The country configurations will implement the relevant recommendations of the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture.

B. The bridging role of the Peacebuilding Commission: the work of the Commission with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council

47. The Commission will explore concrete ways to further strengthen its role as a bridge among the principal organs and relevant United Nations entities.

Action:

(a) The Chair will coordinate with the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council and the President of the Economic and Social Council in preparation for the High-level Dialogue to be held on 24 January 2017;

(b) The Chair will coordinate with the President of the General Assembly in preparation for activities that can feed into the General Assembly high-level meeting on "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace", to be convened in accordance with the resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture adopted during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly;

(c) The Organizational Committee will draw upon the main findings of the stocktaking exercise, undertaken in 2016, of its advisory function with regard to the Security Council and consider practical ways in which to implement them; to that end, the Committee will nominate one of the members of the Commission to coordinate the periodic stocktaking exercise in an inclusive manner;

(d) The Chair will coordinate with the presidency of the Security Council in preparation for the convening of the sixth informal interactive dialogue, which may be held in conjunction with the upcoming annual briefing to the Council on the present report;

(e) The Chair will consult with the Security Council's Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa to explore ways to enhance an informal exchange of views on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, with a focus on Africa;

(f) The Chair will coordinate with the presidency of the Economic and Social Council in preparation for the convening of a joint event, which may be held in conjunction with the upcoming annual session of the Commission;

(g) The Chairs of relevant country configurations will continue to ensure that, at the request of the Security Council, their periodic formal briefings to the Council on the countries concerned will be synchronized with the timing of their field visits and will be focused on specific areas to which the Council's attention has been drawn.

C. Partnerships and engagement with other stakeholders

48. The follow-up to the third annual session of the Commission will be carried forward in 2017. The follow-up exercise will provide guidance for the Commission's preparation for the fourth annual session, including on the selection of a theme that would help further elaborate on the identified policy areas requiring further development. The Commission will also strengthen its collaboration with international financial institutions and with regional organizations.

Action:

(a) The Organizational Committee will convene informal discussions with the participation of relevant United Nations entities, international financial institutions, regional organizations and development banks, with the aim of exploring those specific policy areas requiring further elaboration during the fourth annual session. Interested States Members of the United Nations that are not members of the Peacebuilding Commission will also be invited;

(b) The Organizational Committee will coordinate with the World Bank on ways to strengthen collaboration between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Bank. The Committee will also consider opportunities to discuss the United

Nations-World Bank joint policy study on "Sustaining peace: the role of development in the prevention of violent conflict";

(c) The Organizational Committee will consider the communiqué of the African Union Peace and Security Council of 18 November 2016, including proposals on how to enhance the partnership between the Commission and the Peace and Security Council.

D. Towards a more flexible Peacebuilding Commission

49. The Commission will continue to consider diversifying its working methods to enhance its efficiency and flexibility in support of sustaining peace.

Action:

(a) The Organizational Committee will continue its consideration of the theme "Financing for peacebuilding" and will hear presentations by countries receiving funds from the Peacebuilding Fund;

(b) The Organizational Committee will continue its consideration of regional and subregional dimensions of peacebuilding, with the consent of all countries concerned and guaranteeing that when convening regional discussions, references to country-specific situations will be made with the consent of those countries;

(c) The Organizational Committee will implement its gender strategy, where relevant, including by nominating a focal point, as per the modalities indicated in the strategy;

(d) The Organizational Committee will hold a thematic meeting on youth, peace and security to discuss preliminary findings and recommendations emanating from the progress study on youth, peace and security mandated by the Security Council in its resolution 2250 (2015) which will be presented to the Council in December 2017;

(e) The Organizational Committee will continue its consideration of the provisional rules of procedure and working methods of Commission. The Committee will report on progress made in the improvement of the Commission's working methods in its next annual report.

E. Financing for peacebuilding: strengthening the synergies between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund

50. The Commission will continue to discuss ways to ensure stronger synergies between Commission and the Fund, including by keeping itself better informed on the activities of the Fund.

Action:

The Organizational Committee, with a view to ensuring that it is constantly informed of the activities of the Peacebuilding Fund, will convene periodic meetings with Peacebuilding Support Office or with members of the Advisory Group of the Fund.

Annex

Working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission

Part A: implementable actions based on good practices

(informally adopted by the Commission on 18 November 2016)

The present document contains recommendations whose objectives and outcomes have been established as good practices, and that can be addressed through an informal process. These recommendations are accompanied by relevant examples. It also includes additional action areas whose implementation can contribute to the efficiency and flexibility of the Commission. The Commission can implement all of these actions without the need to amend its provisional rules of procedure. The recommendations are all within the mandate of the founding resolutions of the Commission, General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), as well as Assembly resolution 70/262 and Council resolution 2282 (2016). The review of the Commission's working methods is an ongoing process and this informal document will be reviewed periodically, through the Commission' annual reports, in order to assess the added value of the recommendations to the work of the Commission.

Recommendations

1. **Leadership**: The Commission should improve the continuity of its Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

Action:

I. As mandated by paragraph 5 of both General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), which encourage the Commission to improve the continuity of its Chairs and Vice-Chairs, and building upon the established practice of having the outgoing Chair serve as Vice-Chair, thus ensuring continuity and support to its leadership, the Commission will continue to explore ways to further strengthen the continuity of its Chairs and Vice-Chairs. Any informal arrangement will not prejudge the change in the membership of the Commission, which takes place every two years and will operate within regional rotation of Chairs, as spelled out in annex I of the Commission's provisional rules of procedure. The decision to endorse a candidate for each post remains a prerogative of the respective regional groups, for action by the Organizational Committee.

Good practices: over the past few sessions, the outgoing Chair served as Vice-Chair, thus ensuring continuity and support to the incoming Chair.

2. **Forms of engagement of the Commission**: While recognizing the value of the work done by the Commission, including through country-specific configurations, the Commission should consider flexible options for other forms of engagement, including a more engaged role of the Organizational Committee.

Actions:

I. Make greater use of the Organizational Committee as a platform to convene country-specific, regional and thematic discussions, with the consent of all countries concerned, in accordance with its founding resolutions. When convening regional discussions, references to country-specific situations will be made with the consent of those countries.

II. Promote a Commission that can work in a form of "variable geometry", where the character, focus, and duration of its engagement are decided on an ad hoc basis in order to strengthen its efficiency and flexibility.

Good practices: the meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission on Burkina Faso, the Commission's continuing regional/subregional approach and the thematic discussions on financing for peacebuilding, which included Papua New Guinea, Somalia and Kyrgyzstan.

3. **Role of the membership**: the Commission has a very diverse membership, bringing together seven members from the General Assembly, seven members from the Security Council, seven members from the Economic and Social Council, five members from the top troop-contributing countries and five members from the top financial contributors. Therefore, a stronger engagement of all members of the Commission will further enhance its efficiency.

Actions:

I. Make a greater use of the perspectives of the organs that elect or designate the members of the Commission: in addition to country-specific interests, Member States elected by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council are encouraged to bring perspectives of those bodies into the deliberations of the Commission. For example, members can offer advice on the working methods of their constituencies and can highlight relevant ongoing thematic issues in their respective organs that will add value to the work of the Commission and reinforce synergies between the Commission and the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the relevant subsidiary bodies, while respecting the mandate of each body.

II. Members are encouraged to report back to their constituencies on the work done by the Peacebuilding Commission on priority areas that are relevant for the work of their respective organs or groups, and to be champions of sustaining peace. This will add to the visibility of the Commission and enhance clarity on the work of the Commission. Similarly, establishing a predictable workplan (see action 3 below) and summarizing results on a regular basis can lead to a more regular flow of information between the Commission and the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

III. Peacebuilding Commission to nominate Member States which express interest in being focal points, championing thematic issues and initiatives, such as the implementation of the Commission's gender strategy, the discussions on good practices in peacebuilding, including

the link between sustainable development and peacebuilding, the role of youth in peacebuilding, or to engage civil society organizations. The focal points will be nominated for a period of one year. In case more than one Member State expresses interest in being appointed as a focal point for the same issue or initiative, the Chair will facilitate discussions with the candidates and will bring the matter to the attention of the Organizational Committee for further action. Meetings pertaining to the various focal points should be conducted within the framework of the Organizational Committee so as to avoid duplication of work, and in order to enhance the idea of one Peacebuilding Commission.

IV. The Chair, with the consent of Member States, should enhance the convening platform of the Commission by inviting additional partners to participate in meetings of the Commission, when relevant. Such partners may include Member States who are not members of the Organizational Committee, representatives of relevant entities of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society organizations, including youth and women organizations.

Good practices: the annual session of the Peacebuilding Commission is a good example of how the Commission has brought together various partners from the United Nations system and beyond, including representatives of civil society. In discussions pertaining to the regional dimensions of peacebuilding, the Commission also invited relevant partners on an ad hoc basis. For example, the informal meeting on good practices in transition with Timor-Leste and Sierra Leone included representatives from the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme and civil society organizations in Sierra Leone (using video-teleconferencing).

4. **Workplan**: a more predictable and longer-term workplan that would allow broader participation of Member States at the meetings of the Commission.

Actions:

I. Commission to adopt an annual workplan based on the forward agenda contained in the Commission's annual report. The workplan is to be further developed and circulated to Member States on a quarterly basis and, on a monthly basis, listing the dates of meetings, activities and visits of the Commission in all its configurations. Additional previously unscheduled meetings to be added, if required.

II. Workplan to take into account and reflect the relevant calendar of work of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, particularly when it comes to activities where the advisory role of the Commission may be sought. In such cases, the Commission should organize its workplan in a way that strengthens its advisory role.

III. Chairs of country configurations to present their calendar of work earlier in the beginning of each quarter.

IV. Workplan to include a more regularized engagement of the Commission with regional and subregional organizations.

Good practices: the forward agenda of the annual reports of the Commission has been useful in guiding the work of the Commission. The recent visit of the Commission to the African Union (Addis Ababa, 17 to 19 October 2016), which resulted in the African Union making recommendations that the African Union and the Commission hold annual meetings and organize joint field visits. These recommendations were brought to the attention of the Commission for further consideration and action.

5. **Bridging role**: the resolutions on sustaining peace stress the importance of the Commission in promoting an integrated, strategic and coherent approach to sustaining peace, and, inter alia, in serving a bridging role among the principal organs and relevant entities, including financial institutions. Recognizing that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, stronger synergies between the Commission and the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council will ensure more coherence within the United Nations and a prominent role for peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Organization.

Actions:

I. The Commission to better utilize its membership to strengthen its links with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council (see also actions 2.I and 2.II) and to be a champion of sustaining peace.

II. In connection to the Commission's advisory role to the Security Council, in addition to its engagement so far, when invited to brief the Council it should prepare its briefings by aligning its workplan to relevant Security Council meetings (see action 3.II). The activities of the Commission in preparation for these briefings may include internal thematic discussions in anticipation of issues to be discussed in the Security Council, visits to the field, including, when invited by the Council, joint visits with the Council to advance peacebuilding perspectives and the organization of meetings to engage with relevant stakeholders, including international financial institutions, United Nations entities and civil society organizations.

Through this advanced preparation, and the uniqueness of the Commission's convening power, it can have sustained interactions and enhance its efforts to provide the Security Council with substantive advice, for example in matters relating to the synergies between security and development. Similarly, regular exchanges between the Commission and other subsidiary organs of the Council should be further enhanced.

Good practices: the meetings of the Commission with the Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa represented good opportunities to exchange views on issues pertaining to peacebuilding in Africa.

III. The Commission to advocate for a coherent and predictable use of resources for peacebuilding activities, including with international financial institutions, and for innovative financial instruments.

Good practices: the five annual informal interactive dialogues between the Commission and the Security Council, together with the stock-taking exercise on the advisory function of the Commission to the Security Council, represent useful forums to ensure that the members of both the Council and the Commission can strengthen relations between the two bodies. Strengthen the informal interactions between Members of the Council and of the Commission at all levels.

6. **Synergies between the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund**: while preserving the independence of the Fund, look at ways to strengthen the synergies between the Commission and the Fund, and to ensure that Member States remain informed on the ongoing projects of the Fund.

Actions:

I. The Peacebuilding Commission is to hear presentations by countries receiving funds from the Peacebuilding Fund, in particular when peacebuilding priority plans are discussed.

II. The Commission to invite the Chair and the members of the Advisory Group of the Peacebuilding Fund to meetings of the Commission, when relevant.

III. Regular briefings by the Peacebuilding Support Office on the activities of the Fund at the meetings of the Commission would be useful.

Good practices: working relationship between the Commission and the Fund during the Ebola crisis; the meetings on financing for peacebuilding (Papua New Guinea and Somalia, in 2015; Kyrgyzstan, in 2016, which also included a representative from the Fund's Advisory Group) represent innovative ways to keep the Commission informed of progress countries make with support from the Fund.

7. **Format of Commission meetings (open or closed)**: ensure that there is a balance between transparency/outreach and confidentiality of the Commission's deliberations. The Commission, in all its meetings and formats, should enhance inclusivity and ensure that participation reinforces an integrated Organizational Committee and the concept of a unified Peacebuilding Commission. Peacebuilding Support Office to continue ensuring that mechanisms of reporting back to the Organizational Committee on all Commission activities are in place.

Actions:

I. In preparation for the meetings of the Commission, the Chair, upon consultation with countries concerned, should announce whether the meetings are to be open or closed.

8. **Visibility and communication**: there is a need to address the lack of awareness, both in and outside the United Nations, about the work of the Commission and on sustaining peace.

Actions:

I. The Commission to explore ways to increase the visibility of its open meetings, in particular high-level events such as the annual session, to attract more attention from the media.

II. The Commission to explore ways to increase ongoing activity on the web and on social media with regard to all of its meetings and country visits.

United Nations A/71/7

General Assembly

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General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 68 (c)
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Letter dated 23 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the appeal of the interregional Crimean Tatar civil movement Kyrym to the United Nations General Assembly and the European Parliament (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 68 (c).

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**

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Annex to the letter dated 23 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Appeal of the interregional Crimean Tatar civil movement Kyrym to the United Nations General Assembly and the European Parliament for the recognition of the declaration of independence (secession) of the Republic of Crimea and its free association with the Russian Federation, for compliance by States Members of the United Nations with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and for the lifting of sanctions against and an end to the blockading of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

Adopted at the fifth Conference of the interregional Crimean Tatar civil movement Kyrym, held on 10 December 2016 in the city of Simferopol, Republic of Crimea

In the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace, it is stated that the maintenance of a peaceful life for peoples is the sacred duty of each State. However, it is now clearer than ever that the violent coup d'état in Ukraine, which involved arson, the storming of administrative buildings and aggression against law enforcement forces resulting in numerous fatalities and considerable injuries, was a grave development that endangered the life, liberty and security of the people of Crimea.

It had become very evident to the 2.5 million citizens of Crimea that the civilian death toll had started to rise. Furthermore, tens of thousands of radical nationalists, verging on terrorists, were ready to descend on Crimea when given the signal, with the sole purpose of triggering unrest. In the light of such a threat, and conscious of its utter powerlessness in the face of violence and terror, the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, as the popularly elected legitimate authority, chose the only valid course of action: to create the independent sovereign State of the Republic of Crimea, to hold a referendum on 16 March 2014 and, based on the outcome thereof, to join Russia and, consequently, leave Ukraine. There is absolutely no doubt about the genuineness of the will expressed by the large majority of the population of Crimea in the referendum, which averted serious consequences for security, peace and stability in Europe.

Our values are reflected in the fact that we defended our rights, ensured security, avoided bloodshed and maintained peace. It is those very values that should be central to the work of the United Nations and the European Parliament. However, some States do not always respect those values and at times do not uphold them, which was the case with respect to Crimea. Notwithstanding the fact that it is stated in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations that "every State has the duty to refrain from any forcible action", some States Members of the United Nations, in disregard of those principles, are

pursuing a policy of blockades and sanctions against the Russian Federation, the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

In particular, the policy of blockading the Republic of Crimea, including the unprecedented terrorist act of blowing up transmission towers and thereby completely cutting off the electricity supply to Crimea, is a gross violation of the generally recognized principles and norms of international law and an expression of the Ukrainian authorities' disregard for such human rights as the right to health, the right to education, the right to work, the right of access to cultural goods, and other economic, social and cultural rights.

It is obvious that the purpose of this inhumane and futile campaign is to destabilize the situation in the Republic of Crimea, which can bring the residents of the peninsula nothing but suffering and misery, and cannot be justified by any political or other objectives.

Furthermore, by using the word "annexation" instead of "secession", attempts are being made to accuse the Russian Federation of being in violation of international law, although international law does not establish any prohibitory rules on matters of secession. The declaration of independent statehood through a plebiscite (referendum), and thus the separation from Ukraine and subsequent announcement to become a part of the Russian Federation, is not a violation of international law. The organization of a plebiscite for citizens by a part of a country's population does not make that part a subject of international law.

However, despite the protests of the Russian Federation and the repeated repudiation by regional civil organizations of the economic, trade and financial blockading of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, some States continue to disregard the principles enshrined in the main United Nations human rights instruments, thereby facilitating hate crimes and crimes of genocide to the detriment of the civilian population of Crimea.

The world has witnessed how such actions have harmed not only Russia but also the interests of Western countries themselves. In particular, Ukraine and the Ukrainian people have suffered as a result of such a policy, which is at odds with the interests of the many States and peoples that seek to maintain wide-ranging political, trade and economic ties with the Russian Federation.

With regard to the situation of the Crimean Tatar people during the period when Crimea was a part of Ukraine, we note that, in all the years since independence was achieved in Ukraine, not one single piece of legislation was adopted to restore the political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Crimean Tatar people. This encouraged the authorities to commit arbitrary acts and violence against Crimean Tatar returnees and to disregard their rights to political, religious and socioeconomic development.

Therefore, on Human Rights Day, mindful of the principles enshrined in the main United Nations human rights instruments, namely, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the interregional Crimean Tatar civil movement Kyrym:

(a) Calls for:

(i) Recognition that the declaration of independence (secession) of the Republic of Crimea and its free association with the Russian Federation are not incompatible with the norms of international law;

(ii) Strict compliance by States Members of the United Nations with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(iii) Condemnation of the policy of economic, trade and financial blockading of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol;

(iv) The lifting of the political and economic sanctions against the Russian Federation, the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol;

(b) Requests the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in duly informing the General Assembly and the European Parliament of the adoption of the present appeal.

R. Ilyasov
Head of the interregional Crimean Tatar civil movement Kyrym

United Nations A/71/770–S/2017/80

General Assembly
Security Council

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30 January 2017
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General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 34
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 25 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I should like to inform you that Israel persists in violating Lebanese sovereignty and has failed to comply with all relevant international resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). We periodically inform you of such violations, most recently in the list of Israeli air, sea and land violations of Lebanese sovereignty that was issued as a document of the Security Council (A/71/700-S/2016/1084). In addition, the Permanent Mission of Israel continues to send you letters that contain rumours, in an attempt to spread misinformation and obscure its repeated violation of its international obligations. The letter of the Permanent Representative of Israel dated 23 November 2016, for example, contains fabrications and false claims. We should therefore like to convey to you the following response from the Ministry of National Defence:

> The Ministry of National Defence is fully committed to implementing Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), especially with respect to the prohibition on the entry or smuggling of weapons to any party whatsoever through Lebanese State facilities. The claims made in this regard by the Israeli enemy, unsupported by any tangible evidence, are an utter fabrication involving imaginary facts. They constitute a standing pretext for any attacks by the Israeli enemy.

I reiterate that my Government respects its obligations pursuant to international resolutions. On behalf of my country I call on the Security Council to condemn those attacks in the strongest possible terms, and I call on Israel to cease its violations of Lebanese sovereignty and implement all of its duties under Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). The most recent such violation occurred on 24 January 2017, when Israel conducted military exercises in the area of the occupied Shab'a Farms, during which heavy weapons and live ammunition were used. Israeli warplanes also violated Lebanese airspace during those exercises. We have continually warned of the consequences of Israel's provocative and unilateral

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actions, as they undermine the joint efforts of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the Lebanese Army to preserve stability in southern Lebanon.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nawaf **Salam**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations A/71/771

General Assembly

Distr.: General
31 January 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 19
Sustainable development

Letter dated 25 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you the attached information on the outcomes of the socioeconomic development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2016 and the priorities of the economic and social programme in 2017 (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 19.

(*Signed*) Muzaffar **Madrakhimov**

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Annex to the letter dated 25 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Outcomes of socioeconomic development in Uzbekistan in 2016 and the main priorities of the Government's economic and social programme in 2017

On 14 January 2017, the Cabinet of Ministers held an enlarged meeting to comprehensively analyse the outcomes of the country's socioeconomic development and identify the main activities and priorities of the Government's economic and social programme in 2017.

The meeting was attended by leaders of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, State Advisers to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, members of the Government, heads of economic associations and civic organizations, members of the Jokargy Kenes (parliament) and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and also provincial, municipal and district governors (*khokims*). For the first time, senior officials from local governments (*khokimiyats*) and territorial subdivisions of ministries, agencies and companies, as well as entrepreneurs, took part in the government meeting using videoconferencing technology connecting studios in provincial, municipal and regional centres.

A presentation was given at the meeting by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

His report indicated that the continued and consistent implementation in 2016 of the Uzbek development model and the midterm programme for further reform, structural transformation and modernization of the country, developed under the leadership of the first President of Uzbekistan, Mr. Islam Karimov, had maintained stable and sustainable high economic growth rates and macroeconomic balance, which had increased the living standard and quality of life of the population.

During a discussion of topical issues on the agenda of the Cabinet of Ministers' meeting, it was noted that the country's gross domestic product (GDP) rose by 7.8 per cent in 2016. There were growth figures of 6.6 per cent for manufacturing, 12.5 per cent for contracted construction work, 14.4 per cent for retail trade and 12.5 per cent for services. The State budget was implemented with a surplus of around 0.1 per cent of GDP. A positive balance of foreign trade was achieved. The level of inflation did not exceed projections and stood at 5.7 per cent.

More than $16.6 billion (an increase of 9.6 per cent) was invested in the economy compared with 2015. Foreign investments and loans increased by 11.3 per cent and exceeded $3.7 billion. One hundred and sixty-four major investment projects totalling some $5.2 billion were completed, including the manufacture of T-250 automobile models at GM Uzbekistan; the expansion of a cement factory in Jizak Province; and the commissioning of two 900 megawatt combined-cycle plants at the Talijarman thermal power station and also a 150 megawatt high-ash coal burning unit at the Angren thermal power station.

The new electrified railway line between Angren and Pap was completed with a unique 19-kilometre tunnel through the Kamchik mountain pass, providing a reliable transport connection between the Fergana Valley and the rest of the country. "Afrosiyob" high-speed passenger trains became operational along the Tashkent-Bukhara route in both directions.

The policy measures implemented to modernize and diversify agriculture increased agricultural production by 6.6 per cent, including an increase of 11.2 per cent in horticultural production, an increase of 9.7 per cent in potato production and an increase of 10.4 per cent in melon production.

The measures taken to comprehensively support and protect private property and entrepreneurship contributed to the creation of some 32,000 new small businesses in 2016: an 18 per cent increase over 2015. The contribution of small businesses to the country's GDP rose to 56.9 per cent, and to 45 per cent in manufacturing.

As a result of positive structural reforms and rapid economic growth, the real income of the population rose by 11 per cent. Public sector wages grew by 15 per cent, and pensions and social benefits rose by 12.1 per cent. Some 726,000 people gained employment, including 438,500 graduates of educational institutions.

Under the "Year of the Healthy Mother and Child" State programme, a broad range of measures were carried out to improve maternal and child health and to raise a healthy and well-rounded generation. Funds to that programme from all sources totalled over 8 trillion sum ($212 million).

In his report, the President provided a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the outstanding issues and the reserves not fully used, and made proposals on key strategic objectives and the main priorities of the country's economic and social programmes in 2017. Priorities included focusing on the development of an ongoing and open dialogue with the population in the context of the "Year of Dialogue with the People and Human Interests" State programme, and continuing a proactive social policy aimed at further enhancing the standard of living and quality of life of the population and people's material well-being.

The Government and heads of ministries, departments, economic associations and local executive authorities were specifically tasked with eliminating shortcomings in the development of sectors and territories; developing and implementing a package of measures aimed at maintaining high economic growth rates; continuing the proactive investment policy; enhancing the country's export capacity; comprehensively and intensively developing territories; strengthening the protection of business rights and interests; gradually reducing the role of the State in managing the economy; and fundamentally improving the operation of State agencies.

Critical tasks and measures were identified to implement agreed new programmes for the construction of affordable housing and the development and upgrading of road transport and communications and social infrastructure in order to improve the living conditions of the population in urban and rural areas.

At the meeting, during the discussion of the agenda, reports were heard from the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan and his deputies, from the heads

of several ministries, agencies and economic associations, from the presiding officer of the Jokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, and from provincial and Tashkent *khokims*.

The meeting resulted in the President of Uzbekistan submitting the following priorities and requirements to the Government and heads of ministries, departments, economic associations and *khokimiyats*:

First, to develop comprehensive measures to implement the 11 main priorities of the economic and social programme in 2017;

Second, to systematically ensure critical analysis of the country's economic and social sectors and territories and, on that basis, make corresponding adjustments to the main activities and priorities for deeper economic reforms;

Third, to increase the personal accountability of managers and officials for the end results, ensure compliance with strict discipline and enhance the effectiveness of management systems in accordance with increased contemporary requirements.

This meeting resulted in the adoption of a government decision which identified practical steps to implement the main activities and priorities of the country's socioeconomic development programme in 2017.

United Nations A/71/772

General Assembly

Distr.: General
31 January 2017

Original: English

Seventy-first session
Agenda item 84
The rule of law at the national and international levels

Letter dated 27 January 2017 from the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Czechia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit, as an annex to the present letter, information on the Declaration on Jurisdictional Immunities of State-owned Cultural Property and respectfully request that the document, together with the text of the Declaration, be circulated for the purposes of information among the States Members of the United Nations.

The Declaration was an initiative of Austria and the Czech Republic, subsequently joined by a number of other States. Its principal aim is to acknowledge the customary nature of norms protecting certain categories of State-owned property while on cross-border loan for public display.

In view of the legal nature of this issue, we believe it would be appropriate to circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 84.

(*Signed*) Jan **Kickert**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Marie **Chatardová**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations

17-01461 (E) 060217

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 27 January from the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Czechia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information on the Declaration on Jurisdictional Immunities of State-owned Cultural Property

The Declaration on Jurisdictional Immunities of State-owned Cultural Property is based on the common experience of Austria and the Czech Republic, as well as other States, in relation to the difficulties encountered in connection with cross-border exhibitions of State-owned cultural property and with efforts of private parties to obtain a court order seizing such property.

The aim of the Declaration is to increase the protection of certain categories of State-owned property while on cross-border loan for public display. Specifically, the Declaration acknowledges the customary nature of the pertinent provisions of the United Nations Convention on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and Their Property (2004), according to which certain categories of State-owned property (cultural heritage, State archives and property forming part of an exhibition of objects of scientific, cultural or historical interest) in another State are protected against any form of seizure. The Declaration was prepared as a legally non-binding document to express a common understanding (*opinio iuris*) between the signatories.

The Declaration was prepared within the framework of the Committee of Legal Advisers on Public International Law of the Council of Europe. Initially, the Declaration was jointly signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechia and the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria in Brussels on 18 November 2013. The Declaration has since been signed by 16 other States.[a] The Secretariat of the Council of Europe (Treaty Office) serves as the depositary of the Declaration (information on the Declaration, including the list of signatories, is available at www.coe.int/cahdi).

The text of the Declaration is reproduced in the enclosure.

[a] Latvia (8 January 2014), Slovakia (28 February 2014), Georgia (4 June 2014), Romania (28 August 2014), Estonia (17 March 2015), Albania (10 April 2015), Netherlands (15 April 2015), France (28 April 2015), Armenia (25 June 2015), Belgium (26 August 2015), Belarus (14 September 2015), Luxembourg (30 October 2015), Ireland (1 April 2016), Russian Federation (20 May 2016), Hungary (18 August 2016) and Finland (14 September 2016).

Enclosure

Declaration on Jurisdictional Immunities of State-owned Cultural Property

We, the undersigned,

Desirous to strengthen international cooperation in the field of culture;

Recognizing that the exchange of cultural property significantly contributes to the mutual understanding of nations;

Resolved to promote the mobility of State-owned cultural property through temporary cross-border loans for public display;

Aware of the need to reaffirm the international legal framework applicable to State-owned cultural property on public display in another State on the basis of the customary international law on State immunity, as codified in the United Nations Convention on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and Their Property of 2004 (hereinafter the "Convention");

Jointly declare the following:

In accordance with customary international law as codified in the Convention

- Property of a State forming part of its cultural heritage or its archives or forming part of an exhibition of objects of scientific, cultural or historical interest, and not placed or intended to be placed on sale cannot be subject to any measure of constraint, such as attachment, arrest or execution, in another State; and
- Therefore, such measures of constraint can only be taken if immunity is expressly waived for a clearly specified property by the competent national authorities of the State owning the property or if the property has been allocated or earmarked by that State for the satisfaction of the claim which is the object of the proceeding concerned.

In this context, we reaffirm our commitment to the rules of customary international law on State-owned cultural property as outlined above, in relation to any dispute that may arise in connection with cross-border loans of such property intended for public display.

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorized thereto, have signed the Declaration.

United Nations A/71/773–S/2017/88

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
31 January 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 31
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 30 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the escalation of the situation in the Donbas region (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-01474 (E) 030217

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 30 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the deteriorating situation in the Donbas region

30 January 2017

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry expresses deep concern over the intensification of the Russian terrorist forces in the Donbas region.

For the past two days, the Russian occupation forces have carried out massive attacks across the contact line using all available weapons, including "Grad" multiple-launch rocket systems, artillery of 152 mm and 122 mm, mortars of 120 mm and 82 mm and tanks, all prohibited by the Minsk arrangements, as well as small arms. Russian weapons have killed 8 Ukrainian soldiers and left 26 wounded.

Civilians suffer because of the shelling of residential areas; two civilians have been wounded. The cities of Yasynuvata and Avdiivka were fully cut off of electricity by the shelling. More than 400,000 peaceful civilians in the region have no access to water, electricity and heating. Given the harsh weather conditions and the continuing shelling by the militants, the humanitarian situation in the area continues to deteriorate.

Such actions of the Kremlin may qualify as a war crime, a gross violation of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and an unlawful, wanton and extensive destruction of property not justified by military necessity.

Obviously, the current escalation in the Donbas region is a clear indication of Russia's continued blatant disregard of its commitments under the Minsk arrangements, with a view to preventing the stabilization of the situation and achieving any progress in the security and humanitarian spheres.

We demand that the Russian Federation cease hostilities immediately and comply strictly with the ceasefire.

We request that our international partners step up political and diplomatic pressure on the Kremlin to stop the dangerous escalation in the Donbas region and avoid a humanitarian catastrophe there.

United Nations A/71/774–S/2017/93

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
2 February 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda items 113 and 121

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Identical letters dated 1 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a note on the selection process for the Secretary-General of the United Nations (see annex). The note is written in my personal capacity, based on my experience, especially as the President of the Security Council for the month of July 2016.

I hope this note will serve as a reference for future selection processes.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 113 and 121, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Koro **Bessho**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations

17-01632 (E) 100217

Please recycle

Annex to the identical letters dated 1 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Selection process for the Secretary-General of the United Nations: achievements and lessons learned

I. Introduction

1. There is no doubt that the selection of the new Secretary-General of the United Nations was one of the most important missions that the Security Council accomplished in 2016. On 6 October 2016, the Council adopted, by acclamation, resolution 2311 (2016), which stated:

> "The Security Council,
>
> "Having considered the question of the recommendation for the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations,
>
> "Recommends to the General Assembly that Mr. António Guterres be appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations for a term of office from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2021".

2. Japan was actively engaged in the process for the selection of the new Secretary-General from its early stages until its conclusion, and, as the President of the Security Council for the month of July 2016, oversaw a critical juncture in the selection process. This paper is intended to provide an overview of the entire selection process, with specific emphasis on the process within the Council, and an exposition of the achievements made during the 2016 process and lessons learned for future selection processes. In my personal capacity, I have included some suggestions for future consideration.

II. Overview of the selection process

3. The starting point of the selection process of the new Secretary-General was the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 69/321 on 11 September 2015. A joint letter by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, containing a description of the entire process and inviting candidates to be presented in a timely manner, as stipulated in paragraph 35 of the aforementioned resolution, was submitted on 15 December 2015 (A/70/623-S/2015/988). In the joint letter, it was stipulated that: "the Council begins its selection by the end of July 2016".

4. The next milestone was the inaugural round of informal dialogues held in April 2016, chaired by the President of the General Assembly. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, the General Assembly held hearings for each candidate for the position of Secretary-General. These informal dialogues attracted much attention from the international community. Against this backdrop, the key question at that time was how the Security Council would address the issue of the selection of the next Secretary-General. It was under the presidency of Egypt, in the month of May

2016, that the Council initiated extensive discussions on the selection process. On 25 May 2016, the President of the Security Council announced at the Security Council stakeout that, based on the joint letter of 15 December 2015, the Council had agreed to meet with any candidate who requested a meeting with the Council. This marked the first time in history that the Council had met with the candidates. The Council held three informal meetings with the candidates for Secretary-General in June 2016 under the presidency of France, nine in July under the presidency of Japan, and one in October under the presidency of the Russian Federation.

5. Another key factor in the selection process was how the straw poll process was to be conducted. As mentioned above, the joint letter of 15 December 2015 only stated that "the Council begins its selection by the end of July 2016". No members of the Security Council questioned that the "selection" would involve straw polls. The issue at hand was when and how the straw polls would be conducted. Based on the discussions held during the presidency of Egypt in May 2016, France, in its capacity as President for the month of June, developed the process and formulated the modalities of the straw polls in consultation with the members of the Council. With regard to the date of the first straw poll, the members of the Council, after intensive deliberations, agreed that it would be 21 July 2016, keeping in mind the text and the spirit of the joint letter of 15 December 2015. The President of the Council subsequently conveyed this information to the President of the General Assembly in a letter dated 15 June 2016, which the President of the General Assembly in turn forwarded to all Permanent Representatives and observers on the same day.

6. Japan, as the President of the Security Council for the month of July 2016, finalized the modalities of the straw polls in detail and organized the first straw poll on 21 July. These modalities were in line with those used in previous selection processes. With regard to communications about the straw polls to be made by the President of the Security Council to the President of the General Assembly, the press and the Permanent Representatives of nominating Member States, a procedure was specified in advance to reflect past practice. At the same time, however, a few changes were made. For example, during the 2016 process, each ballot paper contained the name of only one candidate, an alteration from the 2006 selection process in which all candidates were listed on one ballot paper, in order to make sure that the pattern of voting did not reveal the Council member who had cast that particular ballot.

7. The culmination of the selection process in the Security Council was the sixth and final straw poll conducted on 5 October 2016. It was not easy to decide when to introduce "colour-coded" ballot papers in order to clarify the intent of the permanent members. Some members sought to introduce colour-coded ballot papers at the fourth straw poll, as had been the case 10 years before, while others felt it was best left as late as possible in order for a clear winner to emerge before turning to colour-coded ballot papers to find out the intentions of the permanent members. In the end, colour-coded ballot papers were introduced at the sixth straw poll. Following the sixth straw poll, it was confirmed that the Security Council as a whole would recommend to the General Assembly that Mr. António Guterres be appointed Secretary-General. The adoption of Security Council resolution 2311 (2016) by acclamation on 6 October 2016 was thus a precious opportunity for the Council to show its unity.

III. Achievements and lessons learned

8. Reflecting on the process for the selection of the Secretary-General in 2016, several notable achievements stand out, as well as lessons to be learned for future processes.

A. "Transparency" led by the General Assembly

9. One key word that symbolizes the 2016 process is "transparency." As the international community faced so many fierce conflicts and instabilities, expectations for the new Secretary-General were higher than ever before. Echoing such high expectations, it was natural that there were increased calls for transparency and openness in the selection process of the new Secretary-General.

10. One concrete example of change is the aforementioned joint letter of 15 December 2015 issued by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Based on General Assembly resolution 69/321, the joint letter defined the overall framework of the selection process and announced it to the entire membership of the United Nations. This alone represented significant progress in terms of transparency in comparison with previous selection processes.

11. Until the 2016 selection process, the procedures for presenting candidatures for the post of Secretary-General had been somewhat unclear, and transparency had not necessarily been guaranteed. However, during the 2016 selection process, a joint letter by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council informing all Member States of a new candidature was issued every time both Presidents received a written notification from the Permanent Representative of a Member State nominating a candidate.

12. While these developments are significant, the most striking example of transparency was the series of informal dialogues held in the General Assembly. In these informal dialogues, each and every candidate was given a two-hour session to present his or her visions and priorities as Secretary-General. During this session, groups of Member States, individual Member States and representatives of civil society posed questions for each candidate to answer. Each informal dialogue was broadcast live and archived on UN WebTV, viewable by anyone with an Internet connection. The informal dialogues, well attended by the United Nations community and skilfully conducted by the President of the General Assembly, were considered by some to be the "primaries" for the next Secretary-General of the United Nations. In essence, the informal dialogues represented a symbol of transparency. They also seem to have provided the members of the Security Council with the basis for making an informed decision on the selection of the new Secretary-General.

B. Role played by the Security Council

13. How did the Security Council react to the increased transparency led by the General Assembly, in terms of the selection process? Was the Security Council able to respond to the voices and concerns raised by the international community calling for transparency?

14. The Security Council undoubtedly played its part in drafting the joint letter by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council. While negotiations on the joint letter encountered some difficulties and challenges, the members of the Council at the time agreed on the text in the spirit of compromise in order to move the process forward.

15. Additionally, some members of the Security Council, having been inspired by the success of the informal dialogues of the General Assembly, raised the issue of holding hearings in the Council. As a result, hearings with the candidates, which were called "informal meetings", were held by the Council as well. These informal meetings were crucial, as they enabled Council members to exchange views with individual candidates and to conduct a more substantial decision-making process. These meetings were held in a closed setting (at the Permanent Mission of the Member State of the President of the month) in order to avoid duplication with, and differentiate from, the informal dialogues of the General Assembly. However, for the sake of transparency, Council members reached consensus on making public the fact that these meetings were held. This was duly implemented by the President of the Security Council for the month of July 2016.

C. Straw poll results and confidentiality

16. While efforts for greater transparency in the selection process were welcomed by Member States, the Security Council faced severe criticism over the handling of the results of straw polls. A consensus was reached in the Council during the month of June not to disclose the results to the public. However, the press, civil society and the President of the General Assembly of the seventieth session called for the disclosure of the results throughout the process. Putting into perspective the rising number of calls for greater transparency, the President of the Council in July once again consulted with other members of the Council on this matter. Nonetheless, the Council's position did not change, and the results of all straw polls remained confidential.

17. On 21 July 2016, the first round of straw polls took place. Soon after the straw poll ended, the results of the straw poll were leaked in detail and were widely reported in the media. This clearly indicates that one or more Security Council members intentionally or inadvertently gave away the information, although it was the rule, agreed by consensus, to keep the results secret. No member admitted to being the guilty party and the situation repeated itself throughout the process. It was regrettable that such a breach, one which put those who adhered to the rule in an embarrassing or difficult position, persisted. This situation strengthened arguments to officially announce the results rather than allowing them to leak every time.

18. At the informal consultations of the Security Council on 25 July, the selection process of the Secretary-General was raised under the item "Any other business" in order to discuss this issue of the straw poll results. Some members called for announcing the results to the public, while others objected and voiced their opinions that the confidentiality should be maintained. This divergence of views persisted, preventing the Council from concurring on the announcement of the results of the straw poll.

19. There were two different arguments opposing the announcement of the results. The first was a more formalistic one. It was centred on the fact that past practice was very clear and also that, once the Security Council had decided by consensus on the confidentiality at the beginning of the process for 2016, that decision should not be changed during the process in the same year unless agreed upon by consensus. The more substantive argument was that the official role of the Security Council in the selection process of the Secretary-General is the adoption of a resolution recommending a candidate to the General Assembly. According to this argument, the straw polls constitute an internal process conducted ahead of such a formal decision, so that all Council members may observe the voting patterns of other Council members and consider them within their own decision-making process, and that, as such, their results should not be disclosed to the public. There was also an argument that announcing the results to the public might hurt the dignity of certain candidates and make it difficult for them to leave the process with honour. (There was an opposing argument that, if the results of the straw polls were not known to the public, it would be more difficult for certain candidates to leave the process.)

D. Appropriateness of straw polls

20. Expanding the arguments over making the results of straw polls public ultimately leads to the question as to whether or not straw polls are an appropriate means of decision-making within the Security Council on the selection of the Secretary-General.

21. Should the Security Council continue using straw polls for future processes, it can be argued that the issue of confidentiality should remain unchanged due to the internal character of straw polls. Nevertheless, the rise in the number of calls for greater transparency, as shown in the course of the 2016 selection process, seems far from negligible. This quintessential element of the selection process will require that the Council discuss the appropriateness of the use of straw polls as an internal means of expediting the selection process of the Secretary-General. For reference, it may be helpful to recall that it was during the selection process for the Secretary-General in 1981 that the Council started using the method of straw polls to identify a candidate to be recommended to the General Assembly. Before that time, the Council conducted official votes in private meetings.

E. Narrowing the field of candidates

22. It seems appropriate and necessary to review the procedures for narrowing the field of candidates, which might also affect both the appropriateness and the confidentiality of straw polls. In relation to the withdrawal of candidatures, previously it was the independent decision of each candidate whether or not to withdraw his or her candidature for the position of Secretary-General. The 2016 selection process also followed past practice, since no specific discussions were held on this point. Throughout the 2016 process, only 3 candidates out of 13 withdrew their candidatures of their own will as the straw polls progressed, while the other 10 candidates chose to remain in the straw poll process, regardless of his or her respective standing following each straw poll.

23. This did not help the Security Council in its decision-making process. For the sake of effectiveness, the use of shortlisting candidates over the course of the

selection process is worthy of serious consideration. From this perspective, it may be useful to introduce clear-cut mandatory conditions in order to automatically eliminate candidates who underperform in the selection process, either by allowing only candidates obtaining a minimum number of positive votes to proceed to the next round, disqualifying candidates with a certain number of negative votes or by limiting the Council with regard to the number of candidates who may be retained from one round to the next.

24. Taking into account both past practice and the 2016 process, it may be practical for future processes to be accompanied by a detailed procedure on this question. As for the 2016 selection process, although it was not discussed explicitly, there seems to have been a tacit understanding among the members of the Security Council that a candidature would be withdrawn following a written notification from the candidate and from the Permanent Representative of the Member State nominating the candidate in question. In reality, the three aforementioned candidates who withdrew their candidatures all submitted such written notification. However, there was one case in which a Member State changed its candidate in the middle of the selection process, but the candidate decided to remain in the race. The Council had no clear guideline as to how to deal with such a situation.

IV. Conclusion

25. It goes without saying that, from the perspective of the General Assembly, resolution 69/321 on the revitalization of the General Assembly and the joint letter of 15 December 2015 constitute the foundation of the 2016 selection process for Secretary-General of the United Nations. In particular, the informal dialogues of the General Assembly and the joint letters on respective candidatures are considered best practices to increase transparency. It is without question appropriate and necessary to maintain these practices for the future.

26. The crucial part of the selection process that needs to be reviewed is the issue of the straw polls, both in terms of their confidentiality as well as their very rationale. There is no denying that the Security Council was unable to respond effectively to calls for transparency, which were brought to a higher level than ever before by the informal dialogues of the General Assembly. Conditions for securing the greatest possible transparency should thus be considered in future discussions on improving the selection process for Secretary-General.

27. It may not be appropriate to prejudge the conclusions of such discussions. Nevertheless, the Security Council may judge it appropriate both to replace the straw polls with another method that allows the Council to announce its results, and to introduce, at the same time, conditions to enable the shortlisting of candidates.

28. From this perspective, in order to further enhance transparency, the Security Council might find it useful to decide on the basic principles and rules among its members on the selection process for the Secretary-General and to issue them in the form of a letter by the President of the Council, to the attention of the President of the General Assembly, by the end of January of the final year of the mandate of the incumbent Secretary-General, taking into consideration lead time for candidates, among other factors.

29. Based on my experience and the lessons learned outlined above, in my personal capacity, I would like to make the following suggestions for future consideration:

(a) Straw polls should be replaced by official votes at a private meeting of the Security Council. Ballots should be secret. For each candidate, each member would vote in favour, vote against or abstain. The results of the votes should be included in the communiqué of the Council to be issued in accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council. The President should also make the results public;

(b) The first round of such votes should take place within the month of June of the final year of the mandate of the incumbent Secretary-General. The members of the Security Council would discuss, after each round of votes, whether they will proceed to the adoption of a Security Council resolution for recommendation or will continue voting. The President of the Council would make the final decision;

(c) All candidatures should be submitted, in principle, before the first round of voting takes place. A candidate would be eligible to receive votes in the Security Council only after he or she has gone through the processes in the General Assembly and in the Security Council, such as the informal dialogue of the General Assembly and the informal meeting of the Council;

(d) A private meeting is an official meeting of the Security Council, governed by the Charter of the United Nations and the provisional rules of procedure of the Council. The introduction of "colour-coded" ballots should be considered a "procedural matter" in accordance with Article 27, paragraph 2, of the Charter;

(e) For the sake of shortlisting candidates, the two lowest performing candidates should be automatically eliminated from the process following each private meeting for voting, as long as there are more than five candidates remaining;

(f) A Member State may nominate only one candidate. A candidate who loses nomination by a Member State should be automatically eliminated from the process. In addition, a candidate may withdraw his or her candidature voluntarily as well. In both cases, the Permanent Representative of the Member State nominating the candidate in question should accordingly inform the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council in writing.

Enclosure

Chronology of the selection process for the Secretary-General of the United Nations

2015

11 September	Adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/321
15 December	Issuance of the joint letter by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council

2016

12-14 April	Informal dialogues of the General Assembly with nine candidates
25 May	Informal consultations of the Security Council under the item "Any other business" (Security Council members agreed to meet with any candidate who requested a meeting with the Council)
7 June	Informal dialogues of the General Assembly with two candidates
	Informal meeting of the Security Council with one candidate
15 June	Letter issued by the President of the Security Council to the President of the General Assembly (to inform that the Security Council intended to start the process of the consideration of candidacies on the 21 July)
20 June	Informal meeting of the Security Council with one candidate
27 June	Informal meeting of the Security Council with one candidate
8 July	Informal meeting of the Security Council with one candidate
11 July	Informal meetings of the Security Council with three candidates
12 July	Informal meeting of the Security Council with one candidate
	"Leading the United Nations: A Global Townhall with UN Secretary-General candidates"(UN WebTV)
13 July	Informal meeting of the Security Council with one candidate
14 July	Informal dialogue of the General Assembly with one candidate
15 July	Informal meetings of the Security Council with three candidates
21 July	First round of straw polls
25 July	Informal consultations of the Security Council under the item "Any other business"
	(Security Council members discussed the confidentiality of the straw polls and the way forward)

4 August	Withdrawal of one candidate
5 August	Second round of straw polls
23 August	Withdrawal of one candidate
29 August	Third round of straw polls
9 September	Fourth round of straw polls
12 September	Withdrawal of one candidate
26 September	Fifth round of straw polls
3 October	Informal dialogue of the General Assembly with one candidate
4 October	Informal meeting of the Security Council with one candidate
5 October	Sixth round of straw polls
6 October	Adoption of Security Council resolution 2311 (2016)
13 October	Adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/4
12 December	Oath of office by the new Secretary-General in the General Assembly